

I-5/College Way (SR 538): Interchange Improvement

(Project not funded)

This project adds two additional lanes on College Way (SR 538) under the I-5/College Way interchange in Mount Vernon. The bridge's existing retaining walls will be removed and new walls constructed to make room for the additional travel lanes.

Once completed, College Way will have two lanes in each direction under the I-5 interchange bridge. The short back-to-back left turn lanes that channel traffic from College Way to the I-5 on-ramps will be reconfigured and lengthened as side-by-side left turn lanes, doubling their capacity and enabling the addition of ramp metering in the future when needed.



Why is the project needed?

Travelers experience severe traffic congestion near the I-5 College Way interchange. Traffic backs up on the I-5 off-ramps, increasing the risk of vehicles backing up onto the busy highway. Congestion along College Way extends from the ramp intersections, nearly one-quarter mile to the east and through two signalized intersections.

WSDOT's long-term plan is to rebuild the interchange, which will also require changing the profile of the I-5 mainline at a cost of between \$50 and \$100 million.

At a much lower cost, this project will extend the life of the existing interchange, improving traffic flow and capacity on College Way. The improvement will reduce I-5 ramp backups, and backups on College Way that extend back through multiple intersections.

Project benefits

Congestion Relief: Relieves several key bottlenecks and improves intersection efficiency.

Safety: Reduces the risk of ramp traffic backing up to the I-5 mainline. Reduces traffic backups that block intersections and driveways along College Way.

Preservation: Extends the useful life of a 56-year-old I-5 interchange, delaying more costly replacement.

Contact Information

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Estimated cost

(Estimated costs are in 2011 dollars. Estimate hasn't been adjusted for inflation, and is based on less than 1% design.)

Preliminary engineering	\$ 1,000,000
Right of Way	\$ 100,000
Construction	\$ 5,100,000
Total	\$ 6,200,000

